

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SPC-03 NSC-10 L-03 PM-07 NEA-10

TRSE-00 MBFR-04 SAI-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 /096 W

----- 016768

R 042109Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4516

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: POLL SHOWS LIBERAL PARTY NOW MORE POPULAR
THAN TORIES

REF: LONDON 11414

1. OCTOBER 4 "TIMES" PUBLISHED RATHER STARTLING RESULTS
OF POLL BY OPINION RESEARCH CENTER (BEING POUCHED)
SHOWING THAT LIBERAL PARTY HAD PULLED AHEAD OF CONSERVA-
TIME PARTY IN TERMS OF POPULARITY BASED ON CURRENT
VOTING INTENTIONS. POLL CONDUCTED SEPTEMBER 26-30
SHOWED THAT RELATIVE POPULARITY OF THREE MAJOR PARTIES
COMPARED TO PREVIOUS MONTH WAS:

CONSERVATIVE: 31 (30.5)

LABOR: 34 (38)

LIBERAL: 32 (29)

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"TIMES" REPORT SHOWS QUITE CLEARLY THAT WHERE LIBERAL

UPSURGE THROUGH AUGUST WAS MADE AT EXPENSE OF TORIES
RECENT INCREASES HAVE COME ABOUT ALMOST ENTIRELY FROM
LABOR PARTY.

2. REPORT CAUTIONED THAT BECAUSE OF POSSIBILITY OF
SAMPLING ERROR FIGURES MAY NOT BE STATISTICALLY EXACT,
BUT THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE IS CLEAR ENOUGH.
BOTH CONSERVATIVE AND LABOR PARTIES WILL BE ANXIOUS
TO DOWNGRADE THE IMPORTANCE OF LIBERAL GAINS, BUT
EVIDENCE NOW IS THAT ALL THREE PARTIES ENJOY ROUGHLY
SAME POPULARITY WITH PUBLIC. HAROLD WILSON HAS ALREADY
REACTED SAYING LIBERAL PARTY WAS NOT ELECTION THREAT
AND THAT POLL DID NOT HAVE GREAT DEAL OF SIGNIFICANCE
IN GENERAL ELECTION TERMS.

3. COMMENT: WHILE WILSON MAY BE RIGHT THAT IMPORTANCE
OF PRESENT LIBERAL POPULARITY WILL MEAN LESS IN GENERAL
ELECTION TERMS, NEITHER GOVERNMENT NOR OPPOSITION WILL
FIND IT AS EASY HENCEFORTH TO TRY TO BRUSH SIGNIFICANCE
OF LIBERAL RENAISSANCE UNDER THE RUG.

ANNENBERG

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